TRANSCRIPT—ALMA BIGGS

Interviewee: Alma Spivey Biggs, with daughter Dena Biggs Wilson

Interviewer: Ruth Ehrlich and Sandra Jackson

Interview Date: April 30, 2019

Location: Home of Alma Biggs

Length: 1 digital recording; 01:56:41

Transcriber: Rev.com

Transcription Date: November 2, 2022

Abstract: 97-year-old Alma Spivey Biggs, together with her daughter Dena Biggs Wilson, discuss Alma's upbringing as the ninth of twelve children, her parents, her marriage to James Clell Biggs (1912-2003), various residences, and rural life in Buckeye Cove, Swannanoa and Fairview. Alma and Dena share stories from their personal lives and family history, ranging from funny (such as accidentally calling the fire department) to traumatic (such as getting hit by a car, and Alma's father's early death). Topics include the importance of family and the close-knit community in Fairview; memories of childhood and growing up in Fairview, including playing outside and exploring the creek; the impact of technology and modern conveniences on daily life in Fairview; and the role of churches and religion in the community.

RE: We're going to just introduce this and then we're going to record you. But today is April the 30th. This is Ruth Ehrlich and Sandra Jackson. We're here at the home of Ms. Alma Biggs with Alma Biggs and her daughter Dena Wilson, to talk to us, or Ms. Biggs is going to talk to us about her Fairview history. She's already told us a few things. We're

going to have her repeat because it's just going to be real interesting. So, let's get going, okay?

Is that enough, Sandra?

SJ: Mm-hmm.

RE: Okay. Ms. Biggs, you talked about being born in Swannanoa.

AB: Mm-hmm.

RE: Okay. Tell us about that. Tell us about that again. You were born in Swannanoa.

AB: That's all I know.

DW: You got to say--

AB: They moved to Swannanoa.

RE: But you talked about being one of 12 children.

AB: Yep.

RE: Tell us about that. Which child were you?

AB: What?

RE: Which child were you? You were one of 12 and where did you fall into that?

AB: I was the ninth one.

RE: And your daddy died when?

AB: When I was eight.

RE: And then what happened?

AB: Goodness sake, I couldn't even...

DW: When she--

AB: We moved from there.

RE: Okay.

AB: From Swannanoa up to Grovemont and my daddy and my brother had a team of--my daddy had the mules--a team of mules, and I bet you never have seen a... What do they call that thing? A thing that dipped that dirt.

SJ: A shovel?

AB: No, with a mule and a wagon.

SJ: Oh, I don't know about that.

AB: It was straight across here and then back this way and the mule hooked to it and it had handles. They held those handles and dug it down in the ground while the mules pulled it and dug out that lake up there. [Referring to a walking plow?]

RE: How about that? And what lake was that? That got--

AB: Up there in Grovemont.

RE: How about that?

DW: Is that Lake Eden?

AB: No.

DW: What's the name of the lake?

AB: The one at Lake Eden was different. This one is at Sherwood at Grovemont. And one of my brothers was born there.

RE: Yeah. Okay. So, you went to Grovemont. When did your family move into Fairview? Did you get moved to Fairview at some point?

AB: No. Not while Daddy lived. I bet he'd have been glad.

DW: He was from Fairview.

RE: Okay. Your dad was from Fairview?

AB: Yes, he was.

RE: Okay.

AB: And he really liked his family. He did.

RE: And who was your daddy?

AB: Luther Diesel Spivey.

RE: Luther Spivey.

AB: And his parents died when he was young, but I don't know when. But they died during that flu epidemic. Both of them.

SJ: 1918.

AB: Both of them.

SJ: Around in there.

DW: Within three days of each other.

RE: Wow.

AB: And his relatives raised him. The Smarts. But some of them I guess are still living.

RE: No? You don't think so?

AB: And we used to come to visit. We lived in Buckeye. Buckeye Cove, over in Swannanoa, by then. I can tell everywhere we lived. I can tell everywhere we lived after I got here.

RE: So, you'd come and visit Fairview. Who were you visiting in Fairview? Your granddaddy?

AB: No. I had an aunt, the Smarts, that's where we came to visit. They were relatives of my daddy, but I don't know how, she was his aunt.

DW: Trantham. She was a Trantham.

AB: Was she a Trantham?

DW: Mm-hmm.

AB: I know we were related to the Tranthams.

DW: And what was your grandmother's maiden name? Last name. What was your daddy's mother's last name before she married?

AB: I can't tell you.

DW: Trantham.

AB: Yeah, that's right. She was a Trantham.

RE: Okay. So, you came over to visit in Fairview?

AB: We'd come, we didn't visit. They were gone. They died young because they had that flu.

DW: His parents.

RE: Right, okay.

AB: And they didn't have, how many children? Three? Aunt Nora Miller. You know her?

RE: I don't. Sandra might.

AB: I mean, do you know of her? Yes, you do. They lived across from the school house and her daughter...

SJ: Oh, yeah.

AB: Her daughter taught school at Fairview.

DW: No. Her daughter-in-law.

AB: Huh?

DW: Her daughter-in-law.

AB: No. It was her daughter.

DW: No, it wasn't.

AB: Yes, it was, I know. Aunt Nora's daughter.

DW: What was her name?

AB: Taught school over there at Fairview.

DW: At... Oh, I was thinking at Reynolds. Sorry. Cauble.

AB: She married a Cauble.

DW: Oh, now we're getting there.

SJ: I know where you are.

AB: Where I bet you went to school to her.

SJ: No, I didn't go to Fairview. But Eddie did. He had Miss Cauble as a teacher.

AB: They said she was a good teacher.

SJ: He liked her.

RE: And Ms. Blankenship at Reynolds, Ms. Miller?

AB: And there was a James and I don't know the others. Boys. There was more boys than there was... There's one little girl that played basketball against, I reckon it was basketball, something, against one or another. They hated her. Because she was rough as a cob.

RE: Oh my.

AB: Well, Janice was a granddaughter to Aunt Nora. Janice Miller. You remember her? And Paul?

SJ: Okay. I didn't know y'all were related to all them. Yeah.

DW: See, Aunt Nora was a Spivey.

SJ: So, she's kin to Callie Miller, somehow.

DW: Not Callie, but Paul.

SJ: Yeah.

RE: Paul, Junior.

AB: And they had three, I think. Didn't they? Uncle Grady and Uncle Murray and Aunt Nora. I don't know of any other girls.

DW: I have all of this. I should have copied it.

AB: But I guess her name was Aunt Mandy. Mandy, Amanda. But we called her Mandy.

DW: Who?

AB: Aunt Amanda Smart.

DW: Oh yeah. Gotcha.

RE: Now, when you came to Fairview to visit, who were you visiting?

AB: Usually, we went to the Smarts. Because evidently that's where they took daddy in when he was little, because that's where we went.

RE: And how did you travel from Swannanoa to Fairview? You were telling-

AB: In the wagon with the mules.

RE: Talk to us about that.

AB: We come up Minehole Gap sleeping in the hay (laughing).

RE: I love it. How long did it take to make that trip from Swannanoa over to Fairview on your wagon? Do you remember?

AB: Oh me. Don't ask me. Because I was probably laying back there asleep.

RE: How often did y'all come to visit?

AB: We came pretty often.

RE: Did you? Yeah. And did you stay a while?

AB: And one of the oldest sisters, they raised her. And I don't know why because Daddy and Mama both was living then. But they wanted her, I guess. And those Smart girls never married as far as I know. Eva? Eva and well, another...

SJ: So, you can tell--

AB: Mamie. Mamie and Eva.

SJ: Mamie Sue?

RE: Yeah.

AB: I don't--

SJ: Kin to Mamie Sue?

RE: How are you kin to Mamie Sue?

AB: Huh?

RE: How are you kin to Mamie Sue?

AB: She was Mandy's--

DW: Mamie Sue Harkins.

AB: Huh?

DW: Mamie Sue Harkins. She was a Smart, too. How are you kin to her? Was one of them a Trantham?

AB: I don't know.

RE: How about that?

DW: See, she's kin to all these people through the Tranthams.

RE: Okay. How about that?

AB: She's got computers. She goes through a list of them.

DW: The Tranthams owned property from Miller Road down to Fairview. All the way out and up Edwards Road. That was all Trantham property.

RE: Wow.

DW: And those names that you hear, Sayles. One of them was Trantham. Somebody was a Trantham.

SJ: The Sayles and the Tranthams, I'm kin to them.

RE: Are you?

AB: You can go down there and go up Ballard Creek, cross over the mountain there, that's Mama's property. Mama's family.

DW: And sometimes instead of the wagon, they'd walk over the mountain.

AB: They had hundreds of acres. Her uncle, yeah, he inherited it.

DW: And it was quicker to walk over the mountain than it was to ride the wagon.

RE: Ms. Biggs, tell us, you walked over the mountain sometimes instead of coming in the wagon?

AB: I did with my brother where I was living, this is after Daddy died, and I was living with these two old maids. They took me after Daddy died. And I lived with them until I finished high school. One of them was a schoolteacher. Anyway, my brother was visiting with their men, so he wanted to bring me to see Mamie and Eddie, but I knew them because Daddy brought us over every now and then in the wagon. Well, after we got a T model, we might have come in the T model.

RE: How about that? Now how did you meet? How did you meet Clell? [James Clell Biggs, 1912-2003]

AB: How did I meet Clell?

RE: Yeah.

AB: They rented in my mama's--

DW: Parents.

AB: Family's house.

RE: Oh yeah?

AB: And cook, they got out acid wood. Well, one of my brothers married their oldest daughter.

RE: Okay, but how did you and Clell meet because of that?

AB: Because of that. And we were just neighbors.

RE: You were just neighbors. Well ,what started you to sparking?

AB: Huh?

RE: What started you to sparking?

AB: I don't know. I said to myself yesterday, well I didn't want to get married when I got married anyway. (laughing)

RE: And when did you get married? When did you get married?

AB: Let me think.

DW: August 10th.

AB: Yeah.

DW: 1940.

AB: Yep. 40.

RE: So, you were what? How old were you then? Were you 19?

AB: 18.

RE: 18.

SJ: Yep. You touch them.

AB: No, I was older than that, wasn't I?

DW: Well, let's see. You were born in 21.

AB: Anyway. Anyway, I lived with two old maids.

DW: Now how did that come to happen?

RE: Yeah.

AB: I don't know.

DW: Can I tell them what you told me?

AB: We lived above the Stevensons. They came here from Raleigh. Miss Mary, the older one, she had TB. And they came here for her health. Her daddy, well at first she lived on Beaucatcher Mountain, over there. And they didn't even have city water. And they lived, it was like a camp. And they lived outdoors, just all, well it was screened in and they took a bath in cold water. They did this, that, and the other. Well, she was cured. But their mother had died with tuberculosis. And their daddy brought Miss Mary here to keep her

alive. And he did. He kept her alive. They built the house there in Buncombe(?). And Miss Lena taught the school at Swannanoa.

RE: And Dena, how did Ms. Biggs come to live with those two old maids?

DW: Her dad had died. And Maribel, the oldest one, asked grandma if she could help her out. If she would like to leave mother and Aunt Hazel with her while grandma went and made the arrangements.

AB: No, that was just, they were four of us. Two boys and two girls. Hazel--

DW: All four of you stayed with them?

AB: Huh?

DW: All four of you stayed with them while grandmother made any arrangements?

AB: Yeah.

DW: Okay.

AB: Arthur and Hazel.

DW: And Sam.

AB: And Sam.

DW: Yeah.

AB: No, Sam didn't. Because he wasn't but five months old when Daddy died.

DW: Anyway, she stayed there and Grandma made the arrangements. And when she came back, Mother didn't want to go home, but the others did. And Mother just never did go home.

RE: How about that?

DW: She wanted to stay. I don't know why she wanted to stay. She don't know why she wanted to stay. But she stayed with them. And from that point on until she graduated from high school, she stayed with them. When she would go to school, if one of the others was not having a baby and you--back then you didn't just have a baby and get up and do your thing like we do now--she would go take care of whomever when they had babies.

AB: And I got hit with a car when I was in the first grade.

RE: Oh my. How'd that happen?

AB: Well, I don't know how it happened that I was the only one went to school that day. But anyway, the road was all different to what it is now.

DW: Where was it? Where was this that you got hit with a car?

AB: Right where you turn off of, what is it 40? 70? What is it?

DW: Where you turn off Warren? You know how you go to Warren Wilson? Okay. It was right there because her--

AB: You turned off and went to Warren Wilson College and there was a community over there called Berea. You've heard of it.

SJ: I've heard of it.

AB: And there's a cemetery there at the church, really. Well anyway. And at that time you rode the school bus and when you got off a flagman got in front of the bus with a flag to keep the car from going by the school bus. So, my cousin lived right across the railroad there. See the railroad's right there too. She had me by the hand. I was just little, I was just eight. Anyway, I started to cross there and it was running it. That little old boy was up there waving that flag. And this old crazy woman come along behind the school bus. And she just kept a coming and she run over me.

RE: Were you hurt?

AB: You better believe I was hurt. They thought I was going to die.

RE: Really?

AB: It knocked everything in me out. Out the back end.

RE: Wow.

DW: This way. Right out between her legs, all of her female organs were out, squished out.

AB: I've got scars yet.

DW: Broke her shoulder.

RE: Good grief.

DW: They told her she'd never have children. If she lived, she'd never have children.

RE: Wow.

AB: And it broke ribs and collarbone and a big old place. I can remember that up there. And my crotch was just wide open, split wide open. But all my insides run out of there.

RE: Wow.

SJ: To live back then and have that happen, that's pretty good.

DW: They said if she had not been in the mud, that it would've killed her.

RE: Wow.

AB: Well, but I don't think it hit me on that pavement. I don't know that.

SJ: Well, what happened to the woman?

AB: I don't know what happened to her. I don't really care.

SJ: Well, I wouldn't either. But I hope she got in trouble.

DW: She was taking, her little boy was sick and she was taking him to the doctor. It must have been very sick. And I guess that ended her trip to the doctor, don't you?

AB: She said that she was taking some boy to the hospital to have a appendicitis operation. And that's why she was in a hurry.

RE: Wow.

AB: And she didn't live in this state anyway. And probably didn't know the laws.

DW: But she knew what a school bus was.

SJ: And she knew what somebody waving a flag meant.

AB: Well, yeah. She knew she was supposed to stop.

RE: So, you were in the hospital for a long period?

AB: It wasn't too long, it don't seem like.

DW: You told me the other day it was a long time.

AB: Well, it seemed like a long time because I made Mama stay with me.

RE: And where were you in the hospital?

AB: It was, it's St. Joseph's now, I don't what it used to be. What was it?

DW: I think it's always been St. Joe's.

AB: Well anyway, that's where it was.

RE: But Mama stayed with you. Wow. Bless her heart. Bless her heart. So, tell me, how did you get moved to Fairview? Clell was from Fairview. Oh, Clell, I thought I wrote down that Clell was from Fairview. Oh yes.

AB: My husband worked at Sayles'.

RE: Okay.

AB: Sayles' Bleachery.

RE: At what?

AB: At Sayles' Bleachery.

RE: Oh, okay.

AB: He was a painter and he worked there. And, of course, Sayles' Bleachery was full of Fairviewians. And I guess that's the only reason I could give, about him liking...

Because we lived at, well, we lived with Bob Cordell when we first got married, 10 years. We didn't have lights, we didn't have water and anything. We lived up there 10 years. And he worked. Well, our neighbor live on above us. She knew Miss Mary and them. And she knew me. And, Mr. Turner had bought Miss Mary, Miss Lena's Place. Is that right? Yeah. And they had moved.

DW: To Black Mountain.

AB: Then?

DW: They had moved.

AB: They moved to Black Mountain after we left. Yeah. Anyway, this neighbor said to Mr. Turner, he was a single man, never had been married, but he was an old man. And he wanted somebody to live with him. And he had had several. But, you know, the young people, younger than we were, they didn't want to be pinned down with somebody like that, I don't guess. But anyway, they were in Miss Mary, Miss Lena's house. So, Mrs. Rogers sent Mr. Turner down to our house, because she lived right above us, to talk to us. And that was it. He come down there and talk to us and wanted us to go live with him. And she must have given us a pretty good name.

RE: And where exactly did he live that when you went to live with him? Exactly where did he live?

AB: Right down below us in Buckeye Cove. And we moved in there and stayed 10 years.

DW: I was five.

RE: Were you being a caregiver for this man? Are you--

AB: No.

RE: He just didn't want to live alone?

AB: He owned the barber supply house in Asheville. And he went every day after lunch and came back for supper. And he had, see Miss Mary and them boarded a man called Mr. Wall. He had TB, but his rooms were downstairs in the front of the house and he just rented. But he stayed in the bed the biggest portion of the time. And Miss Mary and Miss Lena slept outdoors upstairs. They slept in the sleeping porch. As long as I lived with them, they slept in that sleep... Well, they put me out there to sleep. And I got sick and she had the doctor with me, and he told her to get me in the house and don't put me back out there. And so, she did.

RE: Did the sleeping porch get used year-round. Did the sleeping porch get used year-round? All year round?

AB: All the way around, yeah.

RE: No matter how cold it got?

AB: No matter how cold, they put the mattress on the bed. And then they had a feather tick on top of that mattress. And then they had wool blankets and all this other stuff. And they slept with their caps on. Now I didn't, I slept in the house.

DW: That was because she had TB.

SJ: Right. And see Asheville was good for TB.

RE: Yeah.

AB: They were protecting me. They didn't let me go out there.

DW: Right.

AB: So, well you went upstairs went up here. The sleeping porch was on this side, and the upstairs was on this side, the bathroom and everything.

RE: Now, did you and Clell leave that house to come to Fairview? And how did you do that? How'd you make that decision to come to Fairview?

AB: I don't know why we did. I've thought of that.

DW: They were looking for property to buy.

RE: Ah.

DW: And I remember looking everywhere.

RE: Now how old were you at that time, Dena?

DW: Well, when we moved here, I lacked one month being 15.

RE: Okay.

DW: But-

AB: But he really liked her and he was--

DW: He was such a fantastic person. He never bothered us.

AB: No, sir.

DW: He gave anybody any...

AB: He didn't get into your business. He didn't-

RE: What was his name again?

AB: Oh, he is a-

DW: W.W. Turner. He was a fantastic person.

RE: Okay.

AB: He sure was.

DW: He taught me to play checkers. And another game he tried to teach me and I--

AB: He was in--

DW: Never got it. The fox and the geese. He even drew the board and everything. I never got it.

RE: So, they came to Fairview looking for property.

DW: They came to Fairview to look at this property. He worked with the man that was an electrician. His name was Oliver Carver.

AB: And he lived right up there.

DW: And he knew that Daddy was looking for property. And they had both said they wanted a piece of property with a creek. Well, that was not easy to find.

RE: Ah.

DW: And--

AB: Miss Mary and them had the creek right by the road.

DW: They always lived by a creek. I lived by a creek all my life 'til I got married. And they came out here to look at this and liked it. Oliver's brother-in-law had built this house.

AB: I told Clell I'd like to have a place near a creek--

DW: But I think a couple more people --

AB: --and I think he just set out to find it.

DW: --had lived in it after he went to Washington. But anyway, he told them it was for sale and they liked it. And it was so small. Two bedrooms, and there we had three big bedrooms with a sleeping porch that I thoroughly enjoyed every summer. It was a huge house. And there's so much room and so much property. And then we came here one September and I hated it.

AB: See when they built, they didn't have electricity. They didn't have water in the house when they moved there. All right? They drilled a well, put a pump in it. They had Delco lights. They had a refrigerator run by kerosene oil.

RE: [whispering] How about that?

AB: And the kitchen floor was concrete. And on the other end, they had another, well the garage was over here. And in between the garage and the dining room, there was a

DW: a pantry

AB: storage room, I guess you'd call it. Because that's where we kept our canned goods and stuff. And the dining room was in there, and then the kitchen.

SJ: Well, what was this house like when you moved to it?

RE: Yeah. Tell us about this house when you moved to here.

AB: Well, it's pretty much the same, isn't it?

DW: The living room ended with that door over there, that closet.

SJ: Oh, a closet door. Okay.

DW: I don't know if it was that big.

AB: But finally, they got electricity up in the cove--

DW: At the end of the curtains here, it went right across that way. Then there was a front porch.

AB: --after electricity came up there. They had [inaudible 00:29:12] Delco...

DW: Only two bedrooms. So, the boys had bunk beds in mother and daddy's room for three years. Oh, it was so crowded.

RE: How much property went with the house?

AB: Oh, good gracious.

DW: How much property?

AB: I don't really know.

DW: I thought it was seven acres, but it might have been--

AB: It was more than that. It was about 15.

DW: No, here.

AB: Oh, here? Now, I don't remember.

DW: I don't know. Three or four, maybe. I don't know. I can't remember either.

AB: But we had a cow.

RE: Here?

AB: Over there and over here, too.

RE: You did have a cow. And what? Did you have a garden?

AB: Yes.

RE: A big garden?

DW: Both places.

RE: Did you can? Did you can? What kind of things did you can?

AB: Yes, mercy, yes.

RE: Well, what kind of things did you can?

AB: I canned beans and corn and what? Anything that grows in the garden.

DW: Chowchow, beets.

AB: Because we didn't have electricity to make ice.

DW: Tomatoes, tomato soup mix, you name it.

RE: Well, if you didn't have electricity, Ms. Biggs, and you were doing all that canning, where were you doing the cooking?

AB: In the kitchen, with coal.

RE: With coal. Wow. Did you have a coal burning stove or did you have--

AB: Yep.

RE: A coal burning stove?

DW: Now, when we moved there, we had electricity. Maribel and Lena didn't have electricity when they first moved there.

RE: Wow.

AB: But they wouldn't put the Delco in.

DW: Because there was not even electricity in Buckeye Cove. I can remember them putting electricity in Buckeye Cove.

RE: Wow.

DW: And they would have to blast the holes for the--you know, back then they didn't have all this fancy drilling stuff. They'd have to blast the holes for the poles. And that sound just terrified me. So, on the day they were putting that in up where we lived, we went over to Grandma's. We lived on this hill. There was a big valley and Grandma lived over there. We couldn't see her house, but we would walk down and around and up.

AB: They had a well when I... Well, they still had it. Did you, that hand pump.

DW: Hand pump. Outside.

AB: I know you've seen them.

SJ: Yeah. I can't make them work, but yeah.

AB: Yeah. Well anyway, they put a... With that Delco they pumped the water out of the well.

DW: Into the house.

RE: Now, but when you moved to Fairview and you bought this house, you had electricity then?

AB: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

DW: That was in 1960.

RE: That y'all moved here? That sounds so long ago, doesn't it? In ways, and it's not.

DW: Well, it is.

AB: It seems long to me.

RE: Wow.

AB: And then it's surprising, when you get right down to thinking about it, it's surprising.

SJ: Well, I wanted to ask one thing.

RE: Sure.

SJ: Where did you all get married?

AB: When?

SJ: Where?

AB: Where?

DW: Did you go to the courthouse to get married?

AB: Huh? Yes.

DW: Can I tell you what she told me?

SJ: Yes.

DW: She and Aunt May--

AB: Aunt May was her daddy's sister.

DW: My daddy's sister. See, we're double first cousins. Yeah. You have double first cousins.

AB: And she married my brother.

DW: Anyway. She and Aunt May were canning tomatoes. And they, I don't know, Daddy must have been at work. I don't know where he was. But anyway, Mother said she cleaned up and they went to town and got married and then they come back.

AB: And finished canning tomatoes.

SJ: And finished canning tomatoes?

AB: We did.

DW: It was real exciting.

AB: And my brother took his wife and his kids and left home 'til the next day.

RE: That's cute. That's cute.

SJ: That's sweet. Yeah.

AB: But he was my oldest brother.

DW: They lived with them for two weeks before we moved into the house at Cordell's. And that house is still standing.

AB: And $7 a month rent.

RE: Oh my.

AB: But we didn't have any water. We had water, but it was outside. And the john was up on the hill.

SJ: Well, was Dena and the boys born in the hospital?

AB: Yep.

RE: Now you said you had a cow when you were here and you had a garden when you were here, did you have other livestock? Did you have chickens or pigs or anything like that?

AB: We did have chickens, didn't we? We might have had pigs.

DW: And turkeys.

RE: And turkeys. Were they wild turkeys or were they tame?

DW: Tame. Somebody from work gave Daddy turkeys.

RE: You don't like that, Dena?

DW: They pooped in the door outside. And everywhere you stepped--

SJ: So, like a goose?

DW: But Daddy was the kindheartedest thing. They would have a cow and she'd have a calf. Well, he could have had that calf butchered and there could have been... Daddy couldn't kill it. He'd sell it every time, he'd sell the calf if he decided not to keep it. He'd get a pig and spoil it 'til he couldn't butcher it. He'd have to get--

He couldn't butcher it. He'd have to get somebody else to do it.

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:35:04]

RE: I was going to ask, did you all eat any of the animals? Did you eat the beef? Did you eat the pork?

DW: We never had the beef, but boy did we eat the pork.

AB: And Art Stevens. Art Stevens is like her daddy. He got a little old pig. Somebody gave him pig and we declared he'd never kill it.

RE: And?

DW: He did.

AB: He did! You know, I believe he did it to show us he would. (Laughter.)

DW: But Daddy was... And he would spoil the calves, so they'd follow him around in the pasture. They'd wrestle. The calf would butt him and he'd do other things with the calf. And he just was so softhearted, he couldn't do that.

RE: Was he softhearted with the kids too?

DW: Oh, yes.

RE: With you all too?

AB: Mm-hmm.

DW: Yes.

SJ: And her daddy played bluegrass.

RE: Oh, did he?

SJ: He was a good musician.

DW: We have a guitar that's a Martin. I think it's a D35. I can't...

AB: It's hanging over there.

DW: Mother and Daddy were married in '41, and he bought that guitar in the '30s and we have it still.

RE: Wow.

DW: It is... and still got the best mellow sound. Daddy bought it uptown and it was in the window. The man said, "Well, we'll have to order you one."

Daddy said, "Don't want you to order me one. I want that one."

"But you can't have that one. That's a demonstrator."

"I want that one or I'm not buying one." He bought it and it's still here.

RE: How about that? How about that?

DW: Best sounding guitar. And some lady was selling Avon. She had this little girl. Daddy played his guitar every single day when he came home and it was laying on the back porch on the sewing machine, and that little girl knocked that guitar off and broke the neck off the guitar. I have never seen my dad so--

AB: Depressed.

DW: Depressed is the word, because he loved that guitar and, you know, he put that neck back on that guitar and it sounded as good as ever.

RE: Great.

DW: And that woman just felt so awful.

AB: Tell them how many he made.

DW: She had no idea how valuable that guitar was.

SJ: He made guitars, too?

AB: Oh, he made guitar by the dozen.

DW: And we knew not to touch it. He didn't tell us not to touch it.

RE: Right.

DW: He never did tell us not to touch it. And if I wanted to play it.

AB: He'd love for you to try.

DW: He would... Yeah. And I don't remember the boys ever touching it when they were little. Maybe they did, but I don't remember.

AB: Steven must have because he's good. Now Mark's not interested.

SJ: But she said her daddy, I mean he made guitars, too.

RE: He made guitars? Your daddy made guitars?

DW: No, my daddy.

RE: Your daddy made guitars? So, Clell made guitars?

AB: Mm-hmm.

RE: Wow.

DW: And mandolins.

RE: Wow.

DW: One of the Clarke boys bought a mandolin.

RE: Really? How about that?

AB: And he made this last one. He was making it when he died. Well, he finished it, really. And he said, "This is the last one I'm going to make and I'm going to keep it at home." You know who's got it?

RE: Who's got it?

DW: Steve.

RE: Does he? Does he?

DW: Well, it sounds very good.

AB: You know I had it 'til just awhile ago.

RE: How about that?

AB: And I went off somewhere and that rascal come in here and got my guitar and carried it up at his house.

DW: Well, didn't he make Daryl one? Daryl has one that he made. My Daryl.

SJ: Does he? Daryl plays, too?

AB: Yes, he has and so has Jeff... what's his name?

SJ: Do your kids play then?

AB: Steven's oldest?

DW: Jeremiah.

AB: Jeremiah.

DW: And we have a mandolin that he made.

SJ: But I didn't know Daryl... Does Alan play?

DW: No.

SJ: Just Daryl?

DW: Daryl doesn't really play either. He used to play some, but he doesn't anymore.

SJ: And the girls don't play?

DW: No.

RE: Ms. Biggs, you wanted to live beside a creek. Did you ever have any trouble with flooding around here? You never had. Your creek was okay, you never had trouble flooding? That's amazing.

AB: No, it'd go off on the other side. But see, our side's higher.

DW: Daddy built a huge rock wall there.

AB: And Clell built a rock wall down here on our yard.

DW: When we first moved here, you could stand in the kitchen and see the creek and there was a big flat rock right in the middle of the creek. Didn't have water on it. The

water went this way. And we'd go out there and just sit in the middle of the creek and listen to the water. But at some point, he had a big berm built. And the back there was... how many poplar trees was there on this little bank right here?

AB: I don't remember.

DW: There was about 14 poplar trees on this property in a row. Right down through here and in the back. And Dad was afraid--you know, lightning hits them.

AB: Oh, and he’s scared to death of a lightning storm.

DW: So, he cut the poplar trees and they had some grading done. When we first moved here the bottom part down here went farther out, and he went down there and built a grill at a rock. And we used it a lot. And we did have some water come up and it washed his grill away, so he didn't go back down there and build another one. And one time the creek came up and washed some of our bank off down there. It was enough that the county gave her money for it. But it hasn't happened again.

RE: Well, that's good.

DW: Yeah.

RE: Yeah. That's amazing.

DW: It does. You can see where it goes over that way.

RE: Tell us where you went to church, did you say at Fairview Baptist?

AB: Mm-hmm.

RE: How long did you go to Fairview Baptist?

AB: Oh Dena, I don't know, do you?

DW: Since 1960.

RE: Since you moved here, you went to Fairview Baptist. And how'd you get over there? Did y'all go in a car?

AB: I went in the car.

RE: Did you drive?

AB: Yeah. We all went in the car, didn't we?

DW: Yeah.

AB: If I didn't drive, Dena did.

DW: Daddy did.

AB: Dena drove. Daddy did.

RE: And you went to Fairview Baptist you said up until about four years ago. Was it four years ago you had broke your ankle?

AB: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I went 'til I couldn't go no more.

RE: Do they ever come see you from Fairview Baptist?

AB: Oh yes, they do.

RE: They do.

AB: They do take good care of me.

RE: That's sweet. Do they bring you sweet stuff?

AB: They bring me meals and everything.

RE: Do they really?

AB: And I get a card every week.

RE: "I want you to know..." isn't that sweet?

SJ: From Mildred Moore?

AB: Huh?

SJ: From Mildred Moore?

AB: Yeah.

SJ: She sends Grammy one too.

RE: Does she?

AB: Does she send you one too?

SJ: No. She sends Sue.

DW: She has people to call her.

SJ: Sue Jackson one.

AB: Oh, does she?

SJ: Yeah.

RE: Does she live alone?

DW: Mother? Yeah.

RE: Wow.

AB: Mildred's one of these quiet types. She doesn't have a whole lot to say, does she?

SJ: No.

AB: But I like her. She's a good person.

SJ: She is.

RE: Tell us what you were doing when we came up to your house today, Ms. Biggs.

AB: I don't know.

RE: Yeah. Tell us what you were doing.

DW: What have you done today?

AB: What have I done?

SJ: What were you doing outside when we came up?

AB: I don't know. What was I doing?

DW: I bet I know.

SJ: About your bugs. Your stink bug.

AB: Yeah, I was killing my stink bug. It was between the window and the screen. Nasty thing. And they get in here, especially in the evening when I'm sitting down after supper. Or if I'm reading or watching TV. Those hateful things come out. Don't you think I don't kill them? I do.

RE: Yeah, I understand that.

AB: And I can't smell. They say they stink, but I can't smell them. I don't want to smell them.

RE: But there's no point in letting them be around stinking everything else anyway.

AB: That's right.

RE: That's right.

AB: And I see him coming. I don't know where he comes from, but he comes across that way and hits that light right there. And when he hits that light, I know I'm up for a fight. (laughter)

RE: Ms. Biggs, since you've lived in Fairview, what kind of things have you seen change about Fairview?

AB: What kind of what?

RE: Things have changed in Fairview since you've moved here?

AB: I can't think of anything that--

DW: [whispering] Yes, you can. Yes, you can.

RE: Maybe Dena can help you.

DW: What was it like when we moved out here?

AB: Well, I don't know, I was just glad to be out here.

DW: We come out here and there was a lot of seniors and people would be sitting on their front porch in the daytime, in the middle of the day, sitting on the porch. I loved that.

RE: Were they waving as people came by?

DW: I don't remember. But they'd be sitting on the porch because they'd worked in the morning and they went back in the evening just like people did.

AB: Especially up Old Fort Road.

DW: Yeah.

AB: Everybody was free then.

DW: I didn't ever go to Fairview School. I went to Reynolds, and people made fun of you for living in Fairview.

SJ: Oh yeah.

RE: Tell us about that. What do you mean?

AB: Yes, they did. They certainly did.

DW: Called you hillbillies.

SJ: Farview Hicks.

DW: Fairview Hicks.

SJ: No, Farview.

DW: Any kind of name they can think of, they made fun of you.

RE: Why is that?

AB: Did you come here as a teenager?

SJ: Mm-hmm.

DW: Because we were country.

AB: Did you?

DW: But see, they didn't know where I was. They didn't know where I came from. I was country, too.

AB: You were one of the first families.

SJ: My family was, yes.

AB: That we got acquainted with, I think.

SJ: Oh, Grammy and them? Yeah. Y'all were good friends with Ms. Jackson, weren't you?

AB: Yes, we were.

DW: Jean used to babysit our son.

AB: And we went to all the fixins you know, all the parties or whatever, like get-to-together. Her family and ours. Bet all of them are dead, aren't they?

SJ: Yeah. A lot of them are. The Fites. All those y'all were with.

AB: Yeah. Mildred and Forrest. Let's see if I can think of some.

SJ: There's a lot less now.

AB: Of course, I think of me and Mildred and Forrest.

DW: And Fairview Church was full of school teachers.

RE: Was it?

SJ: Yeah.

DW: Oh yeah. Both the Ashworth women were school teachers. Miss Cauble was a school teacher. Can you help me out?

SJ: Blankenship.

RE: Yeah?

AB: Yeah, that's true.

SJ: Her and her sister... What was her name? Noble.

DW: Bert Shuford.

SJ: Bert and Bonnie Shuford.

AB: A lot of body did yonder.

RE: At Fairview Church--

AB: In my lockbox I got all those names.

DW: Ms. Noble and Miss--

AB: They were sisters.

SJ: Blankenship.

DW: Yeah. And Ms. Miller. She taught English at Reynolds.

SJ: Oh, yeah.

DW: Now she was mother's cousin.

SJ: She's the one that came up and told me that my husband was a little cherub when he was little. And I was like... (Laughter.) She told me Eddie was cherub.

AB: Well, he was just a little old thing.

SJ: He was, yeah.

AB: Yeah. You were, too.

SJ: Well, I didn't go to that church when I was little.

AB: Curious, because I knew you.

SJ: No, not when I was little. I didn't.

DW: She was young. She was like 17, 18.

SJ: 17, 18. Yeah.

DW: Before they got married.

AB: Well, I guess I knew you through the Jacksons then.

SJ: Well, that would've been when I was about 18.

AB: Oh, would it?

SJ: That I met you. Yeah.

AB: All up that street because I think about all up that street went to church.

SJ: I think so.

RE: So, Ms. Biggs, you all moved here and the house was already in existence when you moved here, and how many rooms did you say the house had?

AB: Oh.

DW: Four.

RE: Four?

SJ: Dena doesn't like it.

RE: Did you add onto it?

DW: Yes.

AB: It had a porch. A porch. Clell made a room and we put a wood heater out there because I just couldn't stand that oil. I had to have that wood heat.

DW: He increased the living room.

AB: Yeah. From that door on there, didn't he?

DW: Yeah.

SJ: And you were living back here?

DW: He did it himself. In that room back there.

AB: Yeah.

DW: That's her favorite room.

AB: And he built--they had a cow stable out there, whoever lived here had a cow, and then stable right there. And Clell took that stable and made him a guitar shop in there.

DW: A wood working shop.

AB: And you ought to see it now. That snow tore it down.

RE: Oh, did it?

AB: Yeah.

DW: Tore the roof right off.

AB: And all his stuff is in it. After this... And I have to look at that kitchen window. That just killed me.

DW: He went up on the hill and built a barn for the cow.

AB: It's rotting down.

DW: And he milked the cow every morning. Unless they happened to get up late, which was very seldom.

RE: So, did you all drink cow milk?

DW: Well, of course.

SJ: Let me say one thing. The best homemade ice cream I ever ate in my life, Dena Wilson made it with fresh cow milk. And I still tell people about that.

DW: We had this cow and then a gallon jar. A glass gallon jar. She would have that much cream. That was the best cow milk.

SJ: The best ice cream.

DW: It made the best ice cream you ever had.

AB: You don't get any cream now.

SJ: I know.

DW: But you used most of that cream.

AB: Can't even get any good butter.

DW: Just poured it right off.

SJ: I know.

DW: And mother would make buttermilk and she would drink that buttermilk fresh. I like it a day or two, three days old. When it starts getting tangy, is when I like it. She would

eat the butter out of the thing without any salt in it. And could make the best butter you ever had in your life.

RE: You made butter? Did you?

DW: She would sell it.

RE: Wow.

AB: I make this cookie. It's called Butter Jewels. And it's a--

DW: All the time.

AB: You've tasted them, I guess.

SJ: I might have.

DW: It's a shortbread cookie.

SJ: I want the recipe.

AB: It's about this big around. Punch a hole in it and put some jelly in it. It's a shortbread cookie. That's what I was trying to say. Man, that's good. But you put the butter in it that you buy, you just, well, like I say, hang it up.

DW: It really does make a big difference.

RE: Well, where do you get your butter today?

AB: I don't.

RE: You don't?

AB: I buy what I use. They make them... what do you call it? Pasteurize it?

SJ: Yeah.

AB: And it takes all the flavor out of it.

RE: How about that? Well, how long did you drink that milk and make butter from your cow before you gave that up? Do you remember, Dena?

DW: I can pretty well remember.

AB: Well, you could put it up today, by the day after tomorrow you'd be churning.

DW: She'd sit, churn, churn, churn. She'd spread newspaper all over the floor because it splattered. Churn, churn, churn.

AB: Ms. Mary had a barrel.

RE: So, you churned butter?

AB: Yeah.

RE: And how much butter did you make at a time when you were churning butter?

AB: I'd make a pound or a pound and a half, maybe two pounds.

RE: So, you do an awful lot of churning for two pounds of butter?

AB: It's not that much, is it?

DW: I don't know. She'd make about four or five prints. I don't know how much a print was. They were about like that. Oh, have you never had homemade butter?

SJ: Ruth.

DW: Oh, you are missing a treat.

AB: Oh boy, you are.

SJ: I thought you raised a farm in Tennessee.

RE: I was raised in the country, but I don't remember having homemade butter. I remember having unpasteurized milk, but I couldn't drink it. It wasn't for me.

DW: Well, let me tell you. My daughter was about 12 when they decided to sell the cow. She's not drunk milk since then.

RE: Really?

DW: Unless it's chocolate. She will not drink. And I can't drink it either. I can't even stand to smell it.

AB: I love it.

RE: But can you find unpasteurized milk anywhere today?

DW: I was on Facebook Marketplace--

AB: They're not allowed to.

RE: They're not allowed?

AB: It's against the law, isn't it?

DW: ... the other day, and they were advertising fresh milk. But there's a way they treat it, but it's not pasteurized now. That pasteurization and the milk you got now, that's not all milk. I don't care what they say. It's whole milk, they mix it with water.

AB: Well, you look at it and tell it's not because it's got a blue cast to it.

RE: Huh.

DW: Now this dairy over here had Holstein cows. When the cow would have to be dry... Do you know what that means?

RE: Mm-mm.

DW: When the cow is going to have a calf up to a certain point, you can milk her, but then you don't milk her.

AB: Let her go dry.

DW: They call it going dry. Until the calf is born, and three or four weeks after the calf is born, you don't milk her.

RE: So, she still has milk in her udder you just don't milk her and it's called going dry.

DW: Well, if you don't milk her, she will go dry.

RE: Oh really?

DW: But if she's going to have a calf, she will have the milk. But anyway, Daddy would go over there and get that milk. It was awful. Holstein cows don't have cream on their milk.

AB: No, they don't have cream.

DW: It's the whitest milk you have ever seen.

RE: Well, what kind of cow did you have that the milk was so good?

AB: Jersey.

RE: Jersey Cow. How about that?

AB: Or a Guernsey.

DW: She was red. Her name was Heart.

AB: Where did we get that cow, do you remember?

DW: In Haw Creek. When Haw Creek was country. I don't know how... This man was, I guess, a farmer. I don't know how Daddy knew about the cow. Probably somebody from the Bleachery.

AB: I bet he did. I bet somebody down there told him.

DW: He was selling old Heart, and Mother and Daddy... I remember going with him to look at the cow. I don't remember how she got to our pasture. I was that young. And one day while I was at school, old Heart was laying... There was a hill here and a hill here and a little... Not a big hill, but in the pasture. She was laying up there, and my brother went up there and sat astraddle of her. And she just laid there and chewed her cud. That's how gentle she was.

Now she had a daughter that wasn't near that gentle. I was always afraid of her. Heart didn't have horns, but that was the best cow. And Daddy would go to milk her daughter, and that cow would step in the milk bucket. She would flap her old assy tail in Daddy's face. Boy, now you talk about a cow getting in trouble. So, he put him a little hook on the barn. He attached her tail every day to that hook, so she couldn't slap him in the face. Didn't keep her from once in a while putting her foot in the milk bucket. But she got in trouble.

RE: Now, did y'all have other animals? You talked about--

DW: Chickens.

RE: Chickens. Did you have pigs too?

DW: Occasionally.

RE: Occasionally.

AB: Yes, sometimes we had one.

RE: Did you ever goats or anything like that? No? And where did you have them? Did you fence them in or could they just run wild?

DW: The pasture up here.

RE: Oh, okay.

DW: No, you couldn't get... No. At Buckeye we had a huge pasture.

AB: Let me tell you a tale.

RE: Okay, tell me a tale.

AB: This was when I lived with Miss Mary. They had a cow. And Miss Mary and her brother went to Raleigh. They came from Raleigh here and left Miss Lena at home to take care of things. They hired my brother to milk while they was gone because Miss Mary and Miss Lena's brother milked. Down here was what we called the lower pasture. The creek went down here and it went under the road and they had a bridge. Well, right here is where they had the gate for the cows to go in and out or cars or whatever. Well, the cow could come under that bridge and get in the upper pasture and come to the barn or up to the house or whatever.

Miss Mary and Trad, they hired my brother to come and milk the cow. Well, he was going to school. Of course, I was too, and Miss Lena was teaching. Miss Lena never bothered around things like that. At that time, I had to walk from the highway over to the house after I got off the school bus. That cow had come under that bridge. No, she didn't. She come through the bars and she took her horns and put those bars down and went through to a big pasture up there. Well, she went all the way across and back, across the road, over into the other section over there. The cow did. See, I came home before Miss Lena did. So, there she was standing. She was standing at those bars when I went by to go home.

Well, when they went back with the vehicle, there wasn't no cow. There wasn't any cow, so come back and they said, "Well the cow's gone. We didn't know where she was." Miss Lena was so mad, and she was meaner than the devil anyway. She accused me of letting

the cow out, so my brother would have to go get her and she'd have to pay him. And I never thought of such a thing. My brother never either.

Oh, she ripped and she roared. Well, here we went across that hill hunting the cow. And she had the ropes in her hand or the chain or whatever. And she preached my funeral all the way. We went there. We got her and brought her back. And I reckon she milked her. I was thinking about this the other day. Did she really milk that cow that night?

RE: Did you milk cows?

AB: I could have milked her, but they wouldn't let me do that for nothing.

RE: Well, did you ever milk Heart?

DW: Yes.

AB: Huh?

RE: Did you ever milk Heart?

AB: Yeah, I guess I have.

DW: Lots of times.

RE: Did you milk, too, Dena?

AB: If Clell had something he had to do.

DW: I never milked.

RE: Yeah?

DW: I was spoiled. I didn't have to milk. I didn't have to feed the chickens. I could chill by the back door.

AB: Anyway.

RE: Ms. Biggs, you've lived around here for a long time and we understand there's been a couple big floods. Were you ever impacted by those big floods?

AB: No.

RE: No? You were far enough away that you weren't impacted by the big floods?

AB: Nothing over there never did get up so big, did it?

DW: Yeah, but we're talking about here.

AB: I know. But over--

DW: I never remembered it.

AB: No, because we didn't cross a bridge to get in our yard.

DW: One time it rained. Now I guess that bridge--

SJ: Here or in Buckeye?

DW: In Buckeye. I guess that bridge was 12 feet off the ground. The driveway and the bridge. And it rained 'til the water was just up right at the bottom of that bridge. Well, the school bus came and Daddy wouldn't let me walk. I don't know why Daddy was home. He wouldn't let me walk across that bridge. He walked across it first and then he got my hand and he walked me across it.

AB: Well, that was stupid.

DW: Because he had to test it to see if it was all right.

RE: How about that?

AB: But she was his pride and joy.

DW: Well, I was on the road for so long. Let me tell you one more story. We had a big table that sat in the kitchen. It was a big kitchen. I mean bigger than these two rooms together. You know them old fashioned houses?

AB: Yeah. We had a great big old dining in there.

DW: And there was a wooden stove that sat... the wood cook stove sat right here. Well, they heated the water with the wood stove and it had the big water tank right here.

RE: Now where was this house?

DW: At Buckeye.

RE: Buckeye. Okay.

DW: And it was one of... I don't know, the round... I don't know if you've ever seen those old fashioned water tanks. And it went almost to the ceiling. Then over here was a table. Well, I was getting ready to go to school and Mother was doing something right in here. And Daddy was putting my shoes on and the lightning hit that. I've never seen anything like this in my life and hope I never do again. Hit that water tank. I can get cold chills thinking about it. It was in a ball. It was not like a round ball. It was like... iridescent all

the way around it. It rolled all the way down that water tank and it went into that floor and we all three were going... You remember?

AB: I don't remember that.

DW: Oh, I'll never forget that.

SJ: That would've been scary.

DW: That was scary.

RE: Very scary.

DW: I don't know why. That was the only time I ever knew it to happen. And like Mother said, Daddy was terrified of a storm. If he heard of a storm coming, he'd come in and shut every window and unplug everything in the house.

AB: Put every young'un around him. Put them in his lap in there, chairs, and they better not move either.

DW: No, you better not move.

RE: How about that?

SJ: So if the lightning struck, he'd be clear and y'all would've been the conductor.

RE: How big was this ball of fire? Was it as big as a basketball?

DW: It looked to me like it was. But you got to remember I was probably six, seven. It looked huge to me.

RE: Sure.

DW: The tank itself is probably, if you round, it probably wouldn't be any wider than that. And it was every bit that wide.

RE: Wow.

DW: It was beautiful, but it was scary.

RE: Wow. So, it went down. Was the floor wooden?

DW: It was concrete.

RE: Concrete. Yeah. She said that. She said that. Yeah. Wow. If it had been wooden, I wonder what would've happened?

DW: Fire, maybe?

RE: I don't know. You sure wonder, don't you? Yeah. Good.

DW: But here, there's been a lot of changes in Fairview. It was farm country. Fairview was farm country.

AB: Yeah, it was.

DW: Well, Nathan Ramsey can tell you how many farms there was in Fairview. A lot.

AB: And people made fun of people in Fairview, didn't they?

DW: And you constantly heard the cows. We live up this way. Geneva Burns, Ray and Geneva had a cow and it had a bell. We lived in a mobile home. And let me tell you, it was a trailer.

SJ: It wasn't a mobile home.

DW: It wasn't a mobile home, it was a trailer. And it would get so hot in there. We'd go to bed with all the windows and the doors open and you could hear her cow, ding, ding. It was so peaceful. You don't hear that anymore. That's such a shame.

SJ: You don't hear the whippoorwills anymore either.

DW: No. Don't hear whippoorwills.

SJ: Bobwhites, none of it.

DW: One day I looked out and there was a bobwhite going through our yard.

RE: Really?

DW: Aubrey Laughter, Jerry's cousin, was raising them. And that one must have got out. The dog just looked at it and it just kept right on going. Beautiful. They were beautiful. That's the closest I've ever seen one loose.

SJ: And what was that?

DW: A bobwhite.

SJ: Oh, yeah.

DW: Walking through the yard.

RE: Well now Dena, you were here about how old did you say, close to 15 when you all moved here? Were there a lot of kids to play with or did you all... What kind of things did y'all do for entertainment? Because you said you were the only child for a long time.

DW: Well, I entertained myself before we moved out here.

RE: Doing what?

DW: Well, when I was little, I loved to play dolls, but I didn't love to play school because I hated school with a passion. I always did homework. I always went to school, but I hated the confinement. When I went to school, you went in that classroom, you sat down and you didn't move 'til the teacher gave you permission. And nowadays they have a different agenda and that's... learning is fun to them. Now I liked to learn. I just didn't like to be confined.

RE: So, when you were at home, were you outside a lot?

AB: She was more like a boy than she was a girl.

SJ: She was a tomboy.

DW: All the time.

RE: Were you? And what you doing?

DW: And I'd go out without my coat and mother would scream. I didn't feel cold. She would just fuss at me. And the creek was so beautiful, especially in the fall.

AB: She's spoiled rotten.

DW: You could see right down to the bottom of it and the leaves would be on the bottom of the creek bed.

AB: That's what the neighbors called her. A lot of my relatives, we lived right close to them--

DW: I would go in the creek with my shoes on 'til I got in trouble--

AB: --Grace Porter--

DW: --for going in the creek with shoes on.

AB: --because we renamed her Grace Porter--

DW: Back then you were lucky to have a pair of shoes to school and one for church.

AB: --she'd go down to the Cordell's house, people we rented--

DW: I started pulling my shoes off.

AB: --then she'd say, "I don't have a cookie up at my house" (Laughter)

DW: I got smart. In the wintertime I would go to the creek. It didn't hurt me.

AB: And that would tickle him to death.

DW: It was cold. The day was cold.

AB: He had her spark, her dad.

DW: It was so pretty, I just couldn't resist.

AB: They just had one girl.

RE: Did Fairview used to baptize in the river?

DW: Right back here.

RE: So, Fairview, were you baptized in the river?

DW: No.

AB: Where was I baptized?

DW: First Baptist Church in Swannanoa.

AB: Yeah.

RE: Okay. So, were you baptized in the river?

DW: The same time. Mother, Daddy and me were baptized. I think Mother had accepted Christ as a child, and I did too. But Daddy wasn't. He wasn't a Christian.

AB: I don't know why he wasn't. His mother was a wonderful Christian.

SJ: He waited longer, right?

DW: Yes. And I was in the seventh grade when he came home from work one day and told Mother he'd got saved at work. And I never saw such a happy woman in my life. She was all over him hugging. And Daddy was not an openly affectionate person.

AB: He, no.

DW: He just had that little grin and she just hugged--

[inaudible 01:10:01] He just had that little grin and she just hugged us all you wanted to, but it didn't bother him. And I will never forget that day that he told her he got saved. But we were all Baptists, all baptized. But now [inaudible 01:10:19] And our church didn't have a baptistry.

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [01:10:04]

RE: But you said there was baptisms that took place somewhere around here.

DW: People used to come back here. It was a real deep hole at one time.

AB: [Phone ringing.] Let that go. It's just plain old advertising. They worry me to death.

SJ: Are you talking about back on your land is where they baptized, at Fairview?

DW: [Answering phone.] Hello?

AB: It was up there in the creek.

SJ: Up behind your house? I didn't know that.

RE: Well, did Fairview Baptist go up there to baptize or did just different churches go up there to baptize?

AB: They all did, I think.

DW: Fairview had their own Baptistry. They always did.

RE: And who would come up here and baptize?

AB: Smaller churches.

RE: Smaller churches.

SJ: Fairview was the elite church of Fairview. It had all the teachers.

RE: Wow.

DW: If there was money in Fairview--

SJ: That's where they went.

DW: Very few people went there, the other churches. That was the big church of Fairview.

AB: Right.

DW: And now they can't pay their bills. It's sad.

RE: Wow.

SJ: Well, that's happening to a lot of churches.

AB: I wonder how many churches there is in Fairview.

DW: A bunch.

AB: There sure is.

SJ: She tried them all, I think.

RE: I tried them all when I was first here. I went down the road trying them. And they all had little tiny numbers of people, 20-25 people or less.

DW: We did the same thing.

RE: Yeah. I went down the road. It was amazing. There's a bunch.

DW: We did not want to be ... We went to independent Baptist churches out here. That's okay if that's what you like, but that wasn't what we liked. We'd been to Southern Baptist and ...

AB: My daddy was a music director in every church we went to.

RE: Was he?

AB: Mm-hmm.

RE: Did you play any music?

AB: No.

RE: No? Did you sing?

AB: Yeah.

RE: What'd you sing?

AB: Anything just to sing.

DW: Alto.

RE: Alto? You sing Alto? Once you moved out to Fairview, Ms. Biggs, did you feel safe? Did you have to lock your doors or did you feel like you-

AB: Lord me, no. I felt just as comfortable as I could be.

RE: Do you still feel comfortable today?

AB: Yes.

RE: Do you?

AB: I sure am.

DW: But do you lock your doors?

AB: I lock the doors, yes I do.

DW: And the windows.

RE: And what made you start locking your doors and windows?

AB: I don't know.

DW: Because you were afraid someone might come in while you were asleep

RE: But nothing had happened?

DW: No, she has had people to knock on the door at night.

RE: Oh, really?

DW: And she--

AB: Yes, I have. And I've heard boom, boom, boom. The other night, I heard something. It sounded like a door shut. And I got up and went all around and I never did see a thing.

RE: What were you going to do if you saw something?

AB: I don't what I'd have done, but I'd have done something.

RE: Did you carry a ball bat or a gun or something?

AB: No, I didn't have something. I was just looking. You know, my first thought is, somebody wants something, somebody needs something.

DW: One of the children.

AB: Mm-hmm. Somebody knocked on the door, and then the telephone rang, I think it was. And I said, "Well, there's not a thing I can do. I can't drive and I can't get up and do anything, so you can just knock your head off." And I never even got up.

RE: But you didn't know who it was?

AB: No.

DW: She doesn't need to get up.

RE: No. Exactly.

AB: Because if it have been somebody that really needed something, they'd have woke me up, wouldn't he? Way I felt about it anyway.

DW: Yeah.

RE: This is a pretty secluded area. But you're pretty safe back here?

DW: Always has been.

RE: Good.

AB: Well, there's Steve right there.

DW: Yeah. My brother lives up here, and he watches ... He knows you're here.

SJ: Now, the other brother lives up in Rainbow Ridge, right?

DW: Yeah. He lives ...

AB: Mm-hmm.

DW: And I just live right up the hill here. I can't see her, but if she needed me--

AB: I bet you I could scream loud enough for you to hear me.

DW: I bet you that's the truth.

AB: You'd know it was me.

DW: I'd know it was you. Occasionally, I can hear my brother. If they're outside on the porch, I can hear.

AB: She can hear him--

DW: I can hear his deep voice.

RE: Do you all come down and see Ms. Biggs every day?

DW: No, I don't.

AB: Well, I may not see 'em for a month.

RE: I want you to know!

AB: It's the truth!

RE: What kind of children did you raise?

AB: I don't know. They're behind the door.

DW: I'm the one that takes her to the doctor most all the time now. Now, sometimes--

AB: Steven knows I need ... He'll take me, he'll do anything for me I tell him, but he don't think maybe--

DW: I keep a check on the doctors and I--

SJ: You're the female.

DW: --do the business kind of stuff. No, I don't call her every day. And she told me I didn't have to call her every day.

RE: You go, mama. Now, tell me this, your children live very close by, did you and Clell give them property or did you all just happen to buy property nearby as it became available?

AB: We just happened to buy this. And I guess they bought theirs.

DW: She gave Steve his, Mark and Sharon bought their property up on Rainbow Ridge. My husband, when we had been dating a little while, took me up on Whitaker Road and he said, "I bought that property when I came out of the service." It was straight down below the road. It was covered with trees. I thought, oh my goodness. I've lived there for 54 years.

RE: Have you really?

DW: It is down below the road, but there is an advantage to that. I never had to worry about my children chasing the ball into the road.

SJ: And she has four kids.

DW: And I have four. I never had to worry about them ... If they were going to ride a bicycle, they had to push it up the hill before they could get in the road. And I might catch them. And we have a big yard. They had plenty of room to play. Now, I have one

son that lives below me and his boys always played in the yard. I have a daughter that lives on Rocky Fork and their girls play. And the other grandson, when he came from Madison County would play with the boys. Yeah, it turned out a nice place.

RE: 54 years.

DW: I have lived there ... I just turned 55.

RE: Wow. How about that?

SJ: And her husband was a pastor.

DW: Yeah, he was called into the ministry. We were married 13 years and I was like, "Oh, no."

SJ: I remember that.

DW: I had seen how pastor had been treated. We got our share of that, and I didn't want to have to deal with that, but I did. And the Lord helped me through it. And now, we've got two grandsons that have been called into the ministry.

RE: Oh, my gracious.

DW: Both Daryl's boys.

AB: And just sweetest gentlemens.

SJ: I've never seen them. I see Celeste on Facebook.

AB: But you know they're my grandchildren, so I'd think that.

SJ: Oh, yes.

DW: You know that little Calvary church--

AB: But they are. They really are nice boys.

DW: You can't see the church, but there's a sign.

SJ: I know.

RE: Is it on the right coming down this way?

DW: Yeah.

AB: And I don't know how. I haven't seen him enough. I don't know Alan's boy, I haven't seen him. That's because they live in Tennessee.

DW: I know this with kid. I've known him all his life and--

AB: When don't live around, you don't see them as much as you'd like to.

DW: --and he is improving all the time. It's amazing.

AB: What?

DW: It's amazing what the Holy Spirit can do through Colby. I know this little kid, I've known him all of his life, and there's this little 20-year-old sitting up there. And to me, a 20-year-old, it's not old. And he is saying things that the Holy Spirit is giving him. And it astounds me how the Holy Spirit's working through him and how he's improving. It's amazing. And Garrett worked with Trinity Baptist who worked with the children and so forth, but now he's doing something at Biltmore, some kind of teaching. I don't know exactly what he's doing.

RE: Ms. Biggs, the last question I want to ask you. What's your favorite memory of Fairview?

AB: My favorite?

RE: Yeah. If you could just tell your mama about one thing of living in Fairview, what would you tell your mama about?

AB: About me living there?

RE: Yeah.

AB: No, I don't know.

DW: Yes, you do. You tell me--

AB: I like Fairview.

RE: What do you like about it?

AB: I like the people and I like the friendliness. Well, that's people. And I've not seen anybody in Fairview that's snobbish, you know. Not that I know of. But they treated us great.

RE: That's great.

AB: Well, they made us family.

DW: Yep.

AB: That's one thing I liked. Of course, a lot of them are relatives, but it's distant.

DW: Isn't it amazing that blood is thicker than water? If somebody thinks you're their fifth cousin, you mean something to them.

AB: Now, I lived in Swannanoa all my life, went to school with everybody over there. Nobody's as friendly as they are here.

RE: How about that? That's great.

AB: They're snobbish.

RE: Are they? Do you think Fairview's going to change?

AB: No, I don't think they'll change, I think they're just like they'd always been.

RE: Good. Good. You don't think newcomers are going to change Fairview? You think Fairview people are going to convert the newcomers?

AB: I don't know that. I hadn't thought about it even.

DW: No, we've talked about that.

AB: The newer ones, maybe they think they're smarter than we are.

RE: You think?

AB: Maybe they think they are.

DW: There you go.

RE: You think anything else we need to ask Ms. Biggs, Sandra?

SJ: No. No.

AB: She said she'd heard enough. (Laughter.)

SJ: No, I haven't.

RE: We could sit here all day.

SJ: I think you're tired.

RE: I just love talking with you. It's amazing.

SJ: We're just not no ignorant hillbillies, are we? (Laughter.)

AB: I'm so glad you came. You know it's just made a happy day.

SJ: Well, I'm glad.

DW: Grandma Spivey said--

AB: Because they come ... And Sue.

DW: They [inaudible, crosstalk]. They were Redmonds and they were [inaudible, crosstalk] all the way across that mountain and go to Laurel Pines to church. And it was called Laurel Bluff then, she said. But the road, Old Fort Road was on the other side of the creek. And if you will look in the wintertime, you could see a road bed that goes all the way almost to Raymond Pressley's on the other side of the creek.

RE: How about that?

DW: And as she said, the road went on the other side of the creek. Isn't that amazing?

AB: [inaudible 01:23:39]

DW: You see, she was a Redmond [inaudible 01:23:43] and they owned all that at the head of Christian Creek. Where they lived is Christian Creek. That guy was the other mountain. But they called it [inaudible 01:23:54] now they're calling it Christian Creek. But the Redmond's own all of that property at the head of that cove. And they had two sisters that one married a Wright and one married a Whitaker, that lived on this side of the mountain.

AB: It's still sore.

DW: The Wright and the Whitaker. And I didn't know that. I was in the hospital having one of the children and the nurse came in to ask me, "Well, where are you?" and so forth, and her mother was one of them. One of the Redmond girls married a Whitaker, and one married a Wright on this side of the mountain. One of your Grandpa Redmond's sisters.

AB: Uncle Will's children?

DW: No, Grandpa Redmond's sisters.

AB: Oh.

DW: One married a Whitaker. And she was a nurse and she told me ... He can open that door.

RE: Oh, he can?

AB: No, he can't from the outside.

DW: He's in.

AB: No, he can't.

DW: He is in.

AB: Was he already in?

RE: Yeah.

SJ: She just let him out.

DW: He will take a big run and hit that door and it'll pop open.

AB: But he could run against it and knock it open. And he does sometimes.

DW: And I guess that's how Grandma met Grandpa Spivey, coming over here to visit her relatives.

AB: Mama said that where our garage is, it used to be a corn mill, and they made corn meal there.

DW: And this was a lake.

AB: People would bring their corn just all around here. And they'd ground it into corn meal right there.

RE: How about that?

AB: My mama could remember that. And the way they got their power, it went from the creek down that hill, around that hill down to the ... What was that?

RE: Do you know when this house was built? You know, I know you and Clell bought it, but do you know when it was built?

AB: No, I don't.

DW: It must have been in the '50s.

RE: Yeah.

AB: Was it the fifties?

DW: I could figure that out.

RE: I was just curious.

AB: Harkins owned it.

DW: Harkins built it.

SJ: Mamie Sue Harkins?

DW: No, the one ... What was his name? He moved to Washington. It was Carol's brother moved to Washington. And his name ... Elmer. And he built it. This house and Hazel and Oliver's house were built alike. Except this was one didn't have that wall. And I'll tell you another house that's built like it. You know where Larry Jenkins lived down on Old Fort Road?

SJ: No.

DW: That house was--

AB: Did you know where that store used to be down on ...

SJ: I've been to it, but I don't remember.

RE: Where'd you do your grocery shopping when you came here to Fairview?

AB: Where did we?

DW: We went to the Colonial store. Do you know where the Colonial store used to be?

AB: Yeah.

SJ: No, I don't remember that.

DW: Below Beverly Hills Baptist Church, there is an exercise ... You could go in and buy used exercise equipment in there now. We drove all the way to the Colonial store.

RE: Wow.

DW: We lived in ... Winn-Dixie was the first grocery store around here. Or was it A&P?

SJ: I think it was A&P.

AB: No, it wasn't A&P.

DW: It was A&P. It was. There was a bakery. What was the name of that bakery?

AB: Don't ask me.

SJ: Townhouse.

DW: Townhouse Bakery.

SJ: Everybody went to Townhouse.

DW: And then there was a little short street and A&P was here. And we drove all the way from Buckeye ... Of course, it didn't take long, there wasn't that many cars to the grocery store.

AB: That's a shame, there's only two of us left; andthere were 12 of us

DW: And mother was pregnant with... Daddy had got a ride to work one Friday, and mother was pregnant with Steven, and she was driving. And you know that hill at Oteen ... You know where McDonald's is?

RE: Uh-huh.

DW: That used to be a much steeper hill there. And she was going to turn off and go to the Bleachery, and the brakes failed on the car. And she hit somebody and tore the car up and tore them up. And back then you didn't have insurance so they settled on an amount of money and they gave it to them. And that rascal wrote her a letter and wanted more money. She said, "No, that's it." But she was pregnant with Steve.

AB: Who was it?

DW: When our brakes gave away on that car.

AB: When you what?

DW: When our brakes gave away on the car at Oteen and you were pregnant with Steve.

AB: Well, I don't remember that.

DW: Mother, that was very traumatic. I'm surprised you don't remember that.

RE: Wow.

AB: We were married five years before she was born, and we was married nine years before Steve was born after her, and then two years for Mark.

DW: She got real fertile. I said, Mother, why did you wait so long? "I don't know. It just didn't happen."

RE: That's amazing.

AB: But I didn't ask for it, I guess. (laughing)

DW: Fairview, it was so quiet and peaceful, and this road out here was dirt. For years this road was dirt. And the dust would just boil.

RE: Oh, yeah.

AB: Well, I didn't pay it any attention. It was that way in Buckeye.

DW: I remember at Reynolds coming out for lunch, sitting outside when it was pretty, during that time you might see three or four cars go down the highway. That's funny.

AB: You might what?

DW: Might see three or four cars go down the highway while you was out to lunch.

AB: Go in there and wait a while.

RE: That's amazing.

DW: It was amazing thinking back on it. Didn't think much about it then.

AB: Or like to sit in the parking lot down at Ingles and see them houses up on the mountain.

DW: That amazes her. You know the houses ... How people hang off of the mountains.

RE: And you like to just go down to Ingles and look up at the houses on the mountains, do you?

AB: Yeah. And one of them looks like it's sitting on top of the other one in one place. It does, doesn't it? We talked about it. And then it says, well, it's not like that when you get up there. I've never been up there. I just see it from down the store.

RE: Cute.

AB: I don't want to live up on that cliff.

DW: If you look up there, it does, it looks like that house ... She is the one that noticed it, I didn't.

RE: I live across from Ingles in that neck of the woods. I live up in a house on one of the first streets. But I've seen the houses hanging on the cliffs when I walk in the neighborhood. And I'm here to tell you, I wouldn't even want to drive up to those houses.

AB: You know, don't do that.

RE: I wouldn't even want to drive up there. Because coming down, I don't believe you can see the front end of your car.

DW: I don't believe you could either.

RE: I don't believe you could. I think you'd just be taking--

AB: I'd be scared to death during a lightning storm.

SJ: Wouldn’t want to live up there in a snowstorm.

RE: I'd be scared to death any time. I honestly think you just must be having to guess on where the road is. I don't know how people do it. Some day I might--

DW: I'm not going to live like that.

RE: No, me either. Me either.

SJ: They don't realize how far the firetrucks have to go up there, too.

AB: I might have to live like that, but I wouldn't buy it.

RE: Amen.

DW: No. I don't want to live like that. Yeah. I don't want to live like I'm living now. We've had a lot behind us for 55 years, and we tried to buy it when we was young and the man wouldn't sell it, so he died and left it to somebody and they offered us a good price but we're too old to go in debt for something. Somebody come in there and whacked every tree on it off and put two mobile homes in.

RE: Oh.

DW: And one of them, I bet when we flush the commode, I bet she can hear it. I said I can hear her breathe. All the property that was down there, why they put her ... I know why. Because they were trying to set those trailers when it was a mud mess back November through. It was just an awful mess and they couldn't get them where they wanted them so they just put them wherever they could. If I'd have been her and that other one ... And the other one is a 80-foot double wide.

AB: That must be the one that Steve said [inaudible 01:33:29] trailer.

DW: They set the trailer, the mobile wide, like this. I wouldn't have had it. You move it or I'm not paying you for it.

RE: Wow.

DW: I mean, it's a mess. The whole thing is a mess. And I talked to the woman yesterday, she said this whole thing is just a mess. The single wide.

AB: You see the Rymer's house over here?

DW: The Schumach's stay there.

AB: Well, it's not Rymer's anymore.

DW: And she don't know about the weather here.

AB: I sit here looking at the weather.

DW: She'll like it in summertime.

AB: I can't sit down. The trees have grown up on it.

DW: She watches the neighbors.

AB: But their house comes up here like this, you need to go straight across the top there where there's one that goes up towards Dena's, a trailer, I suppose. I don't know. No, I guess it is, and put a white trailer there. And I was looking out one day and I thought, "Well, I didn't know that V was on Rymer's house." And that aggravated me, so I just kept looking and looking.

SJ: Then you figured it out?

AB: Finally. That trailer looks like it's sitting on the top of their house as he comes at ...

DW: That wasn't over there when we moved here. Steve and Mark set that field afire before they went to school. It was full of broom sage. And I don't know what they were doing, but they set that field afire. And poor old Mother ... Back then, we didn't have a fire department. That's before we had a fire department at all. Mother had to put it out. I don't know how she did it. Did somebody help you put the fire out?

AB: Well, I don't even remember. It must not have been too serious.

DW: There was nobody on this hill up here. Nobody. There was one house, somebody up where Dalton lives, that was the only house up there and somebody from Texas owned it. And they'd come here maybe once a summer and stay two or three ... A while. That was the only thing that was up there.

RE: Wow.

DW: It's just amazing.

RE: You were a firefighter?

AB: Hm?

RE: You were a firefighter.

AB: Because it was necessary. (laughter)

RE: Amazing. Amazing. Well, we will wind down unless there's something more you want to tell us. This has just been so much fun to talk to you.

AB: Oh, yeah. Let me tell you something.

RE: Okay. Tell us something.

AB: The other day, I was a-monkeying around and I found this little round lidded box. I opened it up and there's a little thing in it. And I didn't know what it was. I didn't see it. But it had a little thing like this in the middle of it. I kept my ... Well, what in the world is that and where did it come from? How did it get here? About that time, here come the fire department. (Laughter.)

RE: You had called the fire department, huh?

AB: Yeah, three trucks.

RE: Oh, my gracious.

AB: And I had to go out and tell them I mashed the wrong button. (Laughter.) Steve, he laughed. He had run over the hill when he heard the fire department, when he knew the fire department, to seeing what was happening to me. And he said, "Well, you've called the fire department." I said, "Well, go out there and tell them it was a mistake." He said, "You did it, you better get out ..." (Laughter.)

DW: She's got a necklace, one of those Life Alert things, which are actually great. Well, one day I thought, "Where's that necklace?" And I reached over, "Mother, where's her necklace." "Hanging on the bed."

RE: Do you have it on now?

SJ: Yeah, she does.

DW: Yeah. We were at the doctor's office and I said something to the ... And they got all over her. I said, "Mother, what did you do when you fell and broke your ankle? How'd you get help?" Well, that's how she got help. And I said, "You could fall and get hurt and you can't get to that bed to get that Life Alert thing." She's worn it ever since.

RE: Good for you.

DW: But she said she couldn't ... Because she kept calling the fire department.

AB: I put that little thing back in that box. It's in there in the box in an envelope. It's funny. It's black. It's not like mine. And I didn't know where it came from. It must not have been mine.

SJ: It's evidently hooked up though.

DW: It works.

AB: I felt like an idiot. (Laughter.)

DW: I got a call one day ... When that thing goes off, they're supposed to call me. And I answered it and they've told me ... And well, it scared me to death.

RE: Sure.

DW: I knew I'd have to get my clothes on, but she's on whatever. I called Steve and I said, "Steve," blah blah blah. And he come running down here, and he called me back in just a minute before I could get fixed, and he said, "She just punched the wrong button."

SJ: Mamie Sue did that not long ago. They had the fire department there.

AB: It was embarrassing.

DW: But I'd rather you be embarrassed than to be hurt.

SJ: Yes.

AB: But I said, "Next time you come, I'll give you a meal. How would you like that?"

RE: Ms. Biggs, what do you do to keep your mind so sharp? Because you are so sharp. What do you do? You said you read.

AB: No, not much. Sometimes I do.

DW: She reads her Bible every day.

AB: I don't anymore.

DW: You don't? You told me you read it when you went to the bathroom.

AB: Well, I do when I go to the bathroom.

DW: She loves to do puzzles, jigsaw puzzles. She loves them. She has a hard time making her hands work. Her mind knows how to do that, but her hands--

AB: That's awful.

SJ: That would be.

RE: Well, you just are so sharp.

DW: She really is.

AB: I can't get it out any more than that. Now, this one's not as bad.

DW: I can remember her ...

AB: Well, it's been here 97 years. No wonder it won't work.

DW: Wringing a dish cloth or her washing with an old-fashioned washing machine, wringing it, and she would take that thing and shake it and it wouldn't have any water in it. It would almost be dry.

RE: Wow.

DW: Because she could wring those things. She was that strong. I never have been able to do that.

RE: Wow.

AB: Well, I have the good little thing on my wrist, like this around it and wad it all up, And they call it something, it's clear. I don't know what it is, but they called it the stinky stuff. And I can't smell so it don't matter.

DW: She's talking about her ankle, the stuff they are putting on it; you can only get it through St. Joseph Hospital and it smells like rotten eggs. It's some kind of--

AB: She told me this morning it smelled like rotten meat.

DW: Oh, it smells horrible. If she opened it right now it'd be all over the house. I'm glad she can't smell it. But it's helping. She was going and it got that small, and then Medicare decided that it wasn't going to get any smaller so they had her quit going. We didn't know who was doing it. She was continually doing what they had told her to do, but it started growing again about this--

AB: Now, it's just got bigger.

DW: Now, it's got big. And Dr. Humphrey will just, "Well, here we are, and it's still there." He's kind of funny anyway.

AB: I don't know if they know what to do or not.

DW: They'll get it small again. They took her and had the blood flow test, and for her age, she's got good blood flow in that leg, for her age. But they had to open it up.

AB: That thing has hurt me today. Awful.

SJ: Well, do you use a cane? Because I noticed you were using a mop out yonder when we came up.

AB: I just happened to have it in my hand.

SJ: But do you have a cane or a walker that you're supposed to use?

AB: Yes. I've got a walker. I've got a wheelchair. I've got a two or three broom handles. (Laughter.)

SJ: Well, why didn't you use the walker? Because that'll catch you better.

DW: Her nurse came the other day and I started to leave or something. Anyway, I was out there talking to Sarah, her nurse, she decided she's going to come outside. She had her walker, she got to the steps, she just tossed that walker out in the yard, held on, went down the steps, and then picked her walker up.

AB: Now, both of you got that wrong. I dropped it. I didn't--

DW: Oh, Sarah said you threw it.

AB: I know she did, but I didn't.

RE: Oh, it makes a better story, Ms. Biggs.

AB: Yeah, it does.

DW: Anyway, it was out in the yard. Well, she couldn't have used it going down the steps anyway.

AB: Well see, it just folded up. Then when she came back up there, she said, "I thought I better come back here and get you before you got killed." (Laughter.)

DW: But we go to the doctor's office--

AB: And I didn't explain, I didn't say anything.

DW: We go to the doctor's office and they cannot believe how agile she is. She could take those legs and just throw them anyway, and the nurse will say, "I can't even do that." She's very agile. If she hadn't broken that foot, I don't know what else she'd have been doing.

AB: Maybe I was supposed to have a broke foot to keep me tame. (Laughter.)

DW: You see this paint? She did that.

RE: Oh, my gracious.

DW: After she broke her ankle.

AB: I hate to be idle. I really do.

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:45:04]

RE: Do you knit or crochet or?

AB: No. Now I don't like that stuff.

DW: She used to sew.

AB: I used to sew and I miss my sewing because I can't see good.

DW: Yeah, that reminded me. I need to make you an eye appointment. She's had... Used to sew too because-

SJ: Dena used to sew, too.

DW: I would, but I wore my machine out and I need another one.

AB: Mine's fine but it's just old.

RE: Give it to Dena so she can sew.

DW: Uh-uh. It's a pedal. I [inaudible 01:45:34] backwards. I'd say, "Mother, why don't you get you an electric?" This one's just fine. I cannot. I don't get the rhythm on that thing.

SJ: I can't either.

RE: We're going to let you go.

AB: I don't see good anymore. I need some new glasses.

RE: Well, you don't have any on right now.

AB: I don't wear them because I can't see good through them.

DW: She don't wear hearing aid either.

AB: You see?

RE: Uh-huh.

AB: Denise took me, bought me new glasses but she didn't take me to the doctor to get the prescription.

DW: Now, she don't know who Denise is.

AB: Huh?

DW: Who is Denise?

AB: Denise is her daughter. It's one of these new things. I saw it laying on the table and I said--

DW: I'm going to call them when I get home.

AB: --on the end of the table, of the end table over there. I saw that there.

DW: That hurts.

SJ: Yeah, that will hurt.

DW: You can slip it back on. Do you know?

AB: Well, I knew it after I found it. After I found it [inaudible 01:46:50].

DW: Last summer she would weed-eat.

AB: What is that thing? [inaudible 01:47:02] it was in my way.

DW: [inaudible 01:47:03] for Christmas. He bought it, my youngest.

AB: He said, "Well, Grandmother, it looks to me like it's the nose thing off your glasses."

DW: We have two little, three hooks, little ones.

AB: I don't know what it was.

DW: I took them home for my husband to sharpen, he said he didn't know how to sharpen them. I've got them things in the car. Anyway.

RE: Ace Hardware.

DW: She kept after me to bring her [inaudible 01:47:33] hooks. I think I got them in the car. Your little hooks.

AB: My what?

DW: Little grass cutting hooks.

AB: Oh. I hope you have, I need them bad.

DW: See?

AB: I had my weed eater out there, I had to cut the weeds from around my iris, it’s blooming. Frank, he's a neighbor up there above Dena, he gave me that thing and brought it down here. It blooms in the springtime and then it blooms again in the fall.

RE: Isn't that great?

AB: Yes, it is.

RE: I have some of those. They're just such a nice surprise, aren't they?

AB: Yeah. Well, he put them all the way up his driveway. But he sold out and moved to Yancey County.

DW: Boone. Boone, wasn't it? Didn't he move to Boone?

AB: No, it was Yancey County he told me. He come to see me one time.

DW: I know. He used to come see her a lot and we got to teasing her.

RE: That she had a boyfriend?

DW: Mm-hmm. She didn't like that at all. ‘That's not my boyfriend.’ But he was really sweet.

AB: He's really a nice person.

RE: How long ago did Clell die?

DW: He died in... Did Daddy die in '02 or '03?

AB: In '03.

DW: In '03.

RE: Three.

DW: He was 91.

RE: Was he really?

DW: He had emphysema. Mother put his bed right here so he could see in and out.

AB: He would've been miserable off in yonder. He couldn't do nothing, but he could at least watch the road.

DW: He always had a fear of being bedridden. The Lord blessed him, he was only really stuck in the bed for two weeks and only one of those he'd remember. But the year before, the summer before he died, my brother makes a beautiful garden out here. Dad always did and he'd watch Steve make that garden and say, "I wish I could get out there." That just hurts to the core.

AB: And he did. He loved the outside. He loved to cut wood, and you know that's hard.

DW: Daddy was a strong man too. But you know, people come from that age, they're strong people. You probably know that better than I do because you interview them. Depression people, they're tough. If we had a depression now, 90% of us would keel over.

RE: We would. That's true.

DW: I mean there's people that don't even know how to plant onions.

AB: Sometimes I think of my mama.

RE: What do you think about your mama?

AB: She had 12 children. When Daddy died, the baby was five months old. There that poor old thing was left with all that gang of young'uns. We swung on her, I never will forget that. Daddy was up on the mountain but she was with him.

DW: When he died he was on the mountain.

AB: But they left baby with us. I remember what am I going to do? That just scared me.

DW: She said he had had a--

AB: They didn't have the help like you do now. You could get medical help and everything now but you couldn't then.

DW: She said he'd been sick all week, his head had hurt, and they didn't go to church that day because he'd been sick. He was sitting on the front porch in a straight back chair, leaning back. Now, this man was learning a new song, just from the notes. I can't--

AB: We didn't have an instrument. He had been sick all week with his head hurting and I never will believe... They said he had a heart attack. But I believe he had an aneurysm. I believe it with all my heart. Because Mama said she'd--it was on Sunday and we always went to church but we didn't that Sunday.

He told her, she's cooking dinner, and he said, "Well, hurry up and get dinner. We'll eat and me and you'll go up on the mountain." I can remember that. But he said, "We'll leave the baby with the girls." We had to go down to Miss Mary's and get milk. She was giving us milk, our cow was dry. Me and Helen went down to Miss Mary's, which was a pretty good ways.

DW: It's a mile, at least.

AB: When we got back, Mama had made a cake and everything. They left to go up the mountain. But you know, we never did eat that cake. We never ate that cake. I don't know what we ate. I guess it just got so hard and brittle nobody wanted it.

DW: She said it just sat there.

RE: How about that.

DW: And she said her mother, they could hear her mother screaming.

AB: They came to a place where there used to be an old house and there was a spring there. They stopped and got them a drink of water. She went on and sat down, so she said, and he was still getting a drink. He went on over there where she was and she said he said, "Whoo, my head's a-swimming and a-buzzing." She said, "I had crossed over my legs and I said well put your head down here. Sit down here and put your head in my lap." He died right there.

DW: She said she rubbed this side of his face and this one would blue. She'd rub this side of his face and this one would turn blue. That sounds like an aneurysm to me. Of course, what difference does it make? He's gone. At 48 years old.

AB: Goodness sake. We were out in the yard taking care of the baby and laughing and hollering. Some of the boys had come home and we was all out there just having a good time. We heard her coming down that mountain.

DW: She knew he was dead, didn't she?

AB: Yeah, she knew he was dead.

RE: Oh, that's hard. We got to take care of this paperwork, Ms. Biggs.

SJ: You want me to turn it off now or? I'm afraid she'll say something else.

RE: Just leave it on and we'll keep going. They can always cut it off if they want to. Mrs. Biggs, we just need for you to tell us it's okay that we can put this stuff in the library in town. Did you know that?

AB: I found a piece of paper, it was in the *Town Crier*, *Fairview Town Crier*.

RE: Uh-huh.

AB: Somebody had put a piece in the *Town Crier* about me and I had saved it. I don't know when it was.

DW: It was for her 90th birthday I think.

RE: How about that. How about that.

DW: Clarke, what's her name?

RE: Annie?

DW: Annie, came over here and made a picture of Mother and Daddy. It was in the *Town Crier* at some point.

SJ: Annie said she, Annie [Clarke] Ager, said she interviewed them, or interviewed your mom.

DW: Mother likes Annie.

SJ: Annie Ager. She's a sweetie.

RE: Oh, she's precious isn't she?

DW: Mother likes everybody. She's got oodles of friends. I guess when I die, I could say I have a lot of acquaintances but not many friends.

RE: Ms. Biggs, if you would, just initial right here to tell us it's okay to put this stuff in the library in terms of printed out.

AB: Now, you're going to have it put in a library?

RE: In the Pack Library downtown.

AB: In the Pack Library.

RE: Yeah. Downtown.

AB: So, it'll be historic. (Laughter.)

RE: That's right. You're going to be part of history.

END OF INTERVIEW.